



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

June 17, 2008

The Honorable Don Perata
President pro Tempore
California State Senate
State Capitol
Room 205
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Karen Bass
Speaker
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Room 219
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Dave Cogdill
Republican Leader
California State Senate
State Capitol
Room 305
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Mike Villines
Republican Leader
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Room 3104
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Senator Perata, Senator Cogdill, Speaker Bass and Mr. Villines,

Public safety is the most important role of government. As such, it remains one of my top priorities, and I know it is also one of yours.

A little more than a year ago, we enacted Assembly Bill 900, historic bipartisan prison reform legislation designed to address our long-term prison needs through a combined approach of construction and rehabilitation.

Our work is underway, but it is not done, and now is the time for us to work together and coordinate AB 900 prison construction, the Receiver's construction plan to deliver federal court-mandated inmate health care and operational reforms that fit into the reality of our budget situation.

We need to address these issues in a comprehensive and integrated manner that preserves and strengthens our reforms and acknowledges our main goal of protecting public safety. AB 900 represents a cultural change in how we build and operate our correctional institutions and how we prepare inmates to come back to our communities.

The Honorable Don Perata
The Honorable Dave Cogdill
The Honorable Karen Bass
The Honorable Mike Villines
June 17, 2008
Page two

Our historic reforms depend on quickly building new space to increase capacity, enhance staff and inmate safety, provide program space and deliver healthcare to meet at least constitutionally minimum standards. Protecting public safety and addressing our fiscal reality requires that we reduce the recidivism rate and the constant churning of the prison population.

Changes to AB 900 to expedite prison construction and to enact the Receiver's plan for construction, parole reforms and other strategies for better managing correctional resources must be dealt with quickly by the Governor and the Legislature. We cannot delay, and if this isn't done *by* us, it will be done *for* us by the federal courts. We must work immediately to address this important issue and find common ground as we did in our original collaboration.

Since the enactment of AB 900, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has built a strong foundation, with significant accomplishments including:

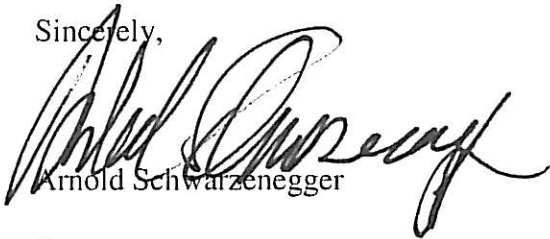
- Taking down more than 5,000 nontraditional beds in places like gyms, dayrooms and classrooms – reducing overcrowding and making room for rehabilitative programs, such as the reopening of 13 gyms for learning and recreation. The number of inmates in nontraditional beds has decreased from a high of 19,618 in August 2007 to 14,733. As of May 28, 4,056 inmates were housed in out-of-state correctional facilities, further reducing overcrowding.
- Placing 7,109 parolees in community treatment beds, an increase of 42 percent in about 18 months.
- Discharging 37.2 percent of parolees at the 13th month pursuant to Penal Code 3001, up from 32.3 percent in 2006.
- A total of 6,700 infill beds are in planning and Environmental Impact Report stages and are scheduled to break ground in 2009. The first re-entry center is slated to open in mid-2009.
- “Operation Changing Tides” launched in April to quickly change the prison custody culture from “warehousing” to active participation in policing and rehabilitation. This program identifies gang members and separates them, which helps make rehabilitation programming possible.

The Honorable Don Perata
The Honorable Dave Cogdill
The Honorable Karen Bass
The Honorable Mike Villines
June 17, 2008
Page three

CDCR Secretary Matt Cate is new on the job, but, as you know, has a formidable record of reform and integrity as our Inspector General, as well as Chairman of the California Rehabilitation Oversight Board created in AB 900. He will be the administration's point person as we work to build additional capacity and accelerate our reforms in a manner that promotes public safety in our communities.

California is a leader in many areas, and we can be a leader again in our efforts to manage our prison population, provide proper health and mental health services, reduce recidivism – saving future budget costs – and increase public safety for the people of this great state. I ask that you join me in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arnold Schwarzenegger", written over the printed name.

/la